3. Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

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CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

545 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by